

Portland, OR – Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D – Ore.) issued the following statement today, regarding the Republican's newest energy bill that is to be debated and voted on by the House of Representatives this afternoon:

"I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 3893, the "Second Energy Special Interest Act of 2005." The Bush administration's energy policy and the machinations of the Republican leadership on this subject have an "Alice in Wonderland" quality.

"It was the Vice President, after all, who said that energy conservation may have been a virtue but it was no basis for a national energy policy. Yet just last week the President was compelled by circumstances to urge the only things that are really going to work to get us out of this energy crisis: conservation, the use of mass transit, and changing American driving habits. Unfortunately, the administration has not put forward any concrete proposals or recommendations for conservation initiatives. Instead, he has cut funding for the conservation and efficiency programs we already have in place.

"It is unconscionable that this most recent energy bill completely misses the point. We're not going to drill, dig, and subsidize our way out of this energy crisis. Burning money is not an efficient way to produce energy. We must have an energy program for this century, not the 1950s. This new energy policy should consist of more efficiency, new technology, and less petroleum.

"If we're going to spend more money, it should be invested in programs that actually help people. Higher fuel efficiency standards, public transit, and even bicycles, will do much more to reduce our dependence on foreign oil than what's in this bill. If just two percent of trips taken nationwide were taken by bikes, we would save more than two thirds of a billion gallons of gasoline a year and up to \$5 billion in total consumer driving costs.

"Increasing fuel economy standards by a mere 1.5 miles per gallon - less than 10% - over the next ten years would save more oil than we currently import from the Persian Gulf and more than we could ever recover from the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, combined.

“Last but not least, this bill’s focus on making it easier to build more refineries by limiting our environmental standards completely misses the point. The fact is, the energy industry makes more money by restricting refinery capacity; the refiners’ profits have jumped eighty percent over the past five years. As long as the oil companies stand to make more money with limited supply, this approach is doomed to fail.

“This energy bill is not only a missed opportunity, but it is a cynical effort by Washington Republicans to exploit the tragedy of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita to give more subsidies to oil companies and to roll back environmental laws.”